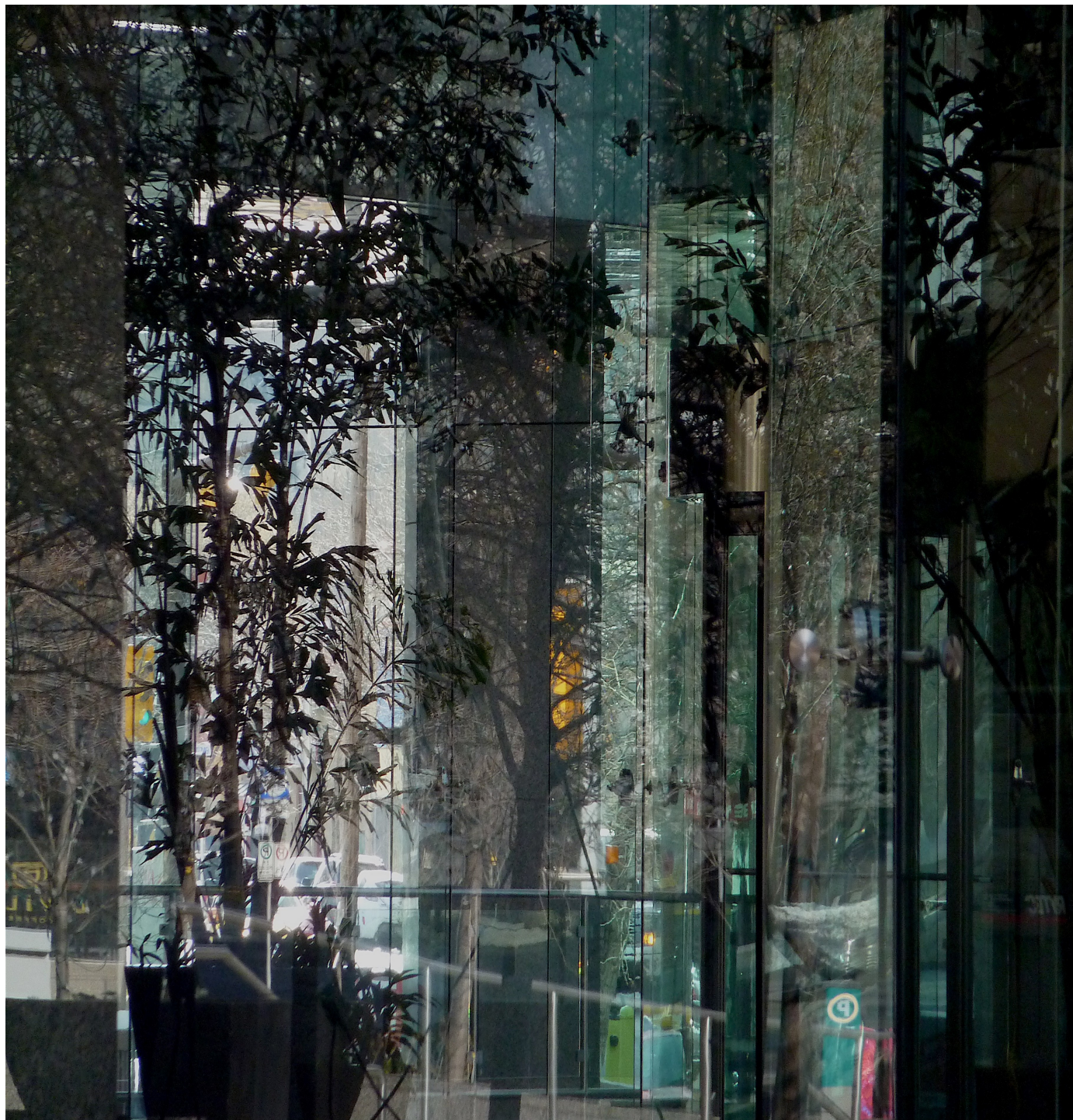


Cryptic Epoch



Lesley Battler

Volume One of a trilogy of poetry collections, entitled *Cryptic Epoch*.

BatCave Publications | Edmonton, Alberta

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I



trickle-down

light

last time i danced
barefoot under the moon
at Starbucks the door opened
to a refill i didn't
request

a week later i found
a burnt-out lightbulb in my
computer bag

redundant

my hometown, north of here, withers along a lake but i'm used to leaving it, this time following the guard to a small hot room covered with time clocks. steam machines hiss, saws bark and choke, wire service tickets clatter, the day starts babbling. i usually work in a musical format but the office is full of arithmetic dressed in powdered wigs, rouged cheeks paling under the display model of a hydrocarbon. loud perfume of starch and bleaching fluid, redundant stories run by compressed air pumps. the idea is always make a tree into a log, a log into a plank

our time

laggard stock

summer assaulted revenue
eighth straight quarter

confined in downgraded sky
the sun was not the sun for
it had never shone on
capital gain

crocpot

admit it, nature, though
pretty, was tossed in a crocpot
by a cook who never rode
bullstock to the stars

consumer equities caused
S&P to spin and hiss, oracular
moan of ruinous waste

state-run centurions
beat their parables on tables
as days lazed in cafés

crazed byzantines forecast
grain yields based on Mayan
almanacs

eucalypti sought god
in the rainy cloud, not
their own labour

brands on the brink
of global expansion faced
the dumbfounding abyss

a dark matter

artistic creation, impressive
perhaps, is invisible to the
bottom line

Michelangelo frittered
six billion hours finishing
the Sistine Chapel

before investing in Mozart
one must note the decline
in real-time call monitoring

O thin men of Haddam
why imagine golden birds
when there is the ludic
rhythm of an Airbus
jumbo

garden

Ursula, in the garden
found a bed of YouTube
users suffused in the
perfume of business
R&D

suddenly a ring of men
regime-approved c-suite
CEOs chanted in orgy
on a summer morn

rationalists in square hats
favoured a less nutty
filibuster

the immaculate syllables
of subprime lending fell on
the naked back of the town
americanizing river
banks

it only takes one soft loan
to carve a partisan deal
through the grape leaves
creating market conditions
for cognac slurpees

freemarket poetics

traders feed on red-blooded
mobile bandwidth

rockscapes, no longer gothic
backdrop in oversized paintings
have been normalized into
productive formations

cliffs, bluffs, scarps
can all anticipate an IPO
from the Alibaba
Group

coal-fired plants
met reporting obligations
causing a jovial hullabaloo
among the rollers of
big cigars

multiple customer
touchpoints such as elite
athletes, evoke the warm
antiquity of Self

while streaming
populations into working
lines of credit

Primerica buzzes
in the autumn air, we are
the answer, you are
the answer, it's
our time

clear-cutting

behind the Louis Quatorze
ironwork the prefect donned
his hippest ibis head as terrorists
infested yet another campus
strewn with *Holy Forest*
vestiges of the Middle
Ages

once humanities professors
were just scenic lunatics
solemn chaldean astrologers
already ransacked by grave-
robbers

witch doctors reciting *Chanson
de Roland* as students loped
through their dream worlds
like haughty camels from
the Gobi desert

then Eurotrash auteurs
washed ashore; bohemians
reaming sublime poems
into the idiom of lingerie
salesmen

how quickly these twerking
quacks became the face of
erectile dysfunction

the prefect knew his head
space had to be all about
having a plan. he consumed
pharmaceutical smoothies

suddenly he knew where
the camera should be placed
and swapped his eyepatch
for a monocle. it *is* doable
he thought, staring into
Pascal's death-mask

i *can* make a teachable
moment out of the dripping
forest, the giant spiderwebs
the green night

**

as foie gras succeeded
raspberry brandy, twenty
universities eliminated
Humanities

the prisons of Piranesi
became an open-concept
chicken bacon Swiss build
offering as many career
sides as possible

University of Calgary
installed nine giant
curricula born of the
Egyptian underworld
in the Toyota Sequoia
chamber

finally, the prefect slept
knowing hordes of little
clouds, once lost in a sky
full of dark arts, could be
the coolant and emission
specialists of the future

rows of certified vehicle
dealers raised their visors
eyes high when he received
his honorary degree

Britney

a life

good bones

you were
born with
a 7-slot
grille

raised on
SelecTrac
tested in 5
key areas

fabulous
suspension
ground
clearance

proven
star-power

play

so much
to do
afternoon
mani-pedi

50 back
flips
pageant
walk
reduce
tummy fat

star-gazing
2 carat stars
bold, breath-
taking, not
sold in stores

rhinestone icons
slice years off
your snap-on
Faceplate

some day you
will appear on
slurpee cups
across America

family values
you luv mum's
bedtime stories
after 4 Weeks
Radical Fast-
Acting Dynakor
gives you 100%
Improvement on
Follicle Clarity

*Convenient
Clinically Proven
Medifast will make
your weight loss
dream come true*

playdate debut
soon you're in
the preschool
biz full-time

you killed in
twin-tower
stilettos

**parent-teacher
meeting**
*being hot
doesn't just
happen — she
needs those
liposuction
updates sent
directly to
her phone*

acclaim
Newsday
says you are
simplicity
itself

no towering
rack of knobs
or dials

according to
the Philly Daily
this 30-day
Excitement
Guarantee is
risk-free

1st Larry King
interview
they lobbied us
with poles and
boat propellers

we must listen
to our president

cover your mouth
come up with
a whoops or
excuse-me thing
when you burp
on air

affirmation
you are *so* a
good person
custom made
with name
and birthdate
inscribed by
artist, Holly

*success will
never stop me
from finding
my very own
McSomeone*

coming-of-age

you're second
generation
bioactive
free of your
mother's belts
supermarket
miracle pills
wonder diets
rubber suits

you can move
up and down
side to side
zoom in with
a single click

you come in
Platinum White
Graphite Gray
6 inches deep
when displayed

user-friendly
your flipscreen
is on from the
moment it hits
your Target bag

control

you hold all
the chain and
cord options

over 180
words to
your name

fans can
record, pause
replay, store
you up to
500 hours
in their
homes

heartbreak

he bought you
a yogurt, said
he wanted out

what designer bag
do you need now?
Kooba? Fenda?
Gucci?

Coach one week
Bulga the next

*are you a
Cheat?*

oops

you did it
again

savoured all
eight entrees
in spite of
your weight

giving back

you donate your
leopard print 5"
training stilettos
to AIDS babies
in the Sahara
and *cried* over
the plight of
the overweight
impacted by
climate change

tween angst

sometimes
for no reason
your face
breaks out
in Juicy
Couture

dear Jesus
does Enzyme
Pumpkin
Masque
ease red-
eye?

will Frédéric
Fekkai Cider
really stop
an outbreak
of Cubic
Zirconia?

or is this
yet another
Santa scam

you doubt
the CitiCard
idyll of your
childhood!

kingdoms of the blind

I
good morning spider
rising above bedlam
humour me, please

say i'm in search of
sunrise and this must
be the place (naïve
melody)

under the eye of Juju
Security i take the veil
of dress code, enter
today's conspiracy

Orpheus escorts me
through the stratosfear
to my Aeron chair

lost cosmonauts ghost
the hundredth window

mummers clog global
servers. seraphim trace
icons in limbo

white-out event
download hard core
Purgatorio

audiostream the Impossible
news from no where
wish i could still
write home

tell them how jets seem
slower in kingdoms
of the blind

II
priests of the golden bull
play polkas from hell on
pocket calculators

painbirds in Armani
nurse their glasses
of magical thinking

Thievery Corp orders ten
new rolling people into
Crazy Egypt

calendars chime over
the screaming delirium
of email

modern cavemen
follow weepy donuts
to the boardroom
early start, Toronto
minotaurae hunt
at dawn

Volga Boatmen sail
the polished naugahyde
talking to starfish
under Ulysses's gaze

Mephisto presents
estimated demiurge
holy egoism of
engineering genius

time to diagram
the gematria, flipchart
the rain forest

afternoon turns
our faces split
the gouda in two

Stockholm Syndrome
sets in the west. only
the strange remain

on the hour

oblique sky speaking in banned vernacular
unhinged gates, lonely henges, bruised moor stewing in its own moods
the music leads me to a deep dark wood where my memories swing from trees
 everywhere i turn some dead king lunges from a lintel
 skeletons clad in armour rust in a courtyard
caryatids wake to denounce their neighbours. tallow candles cast warped shadows
lap of water on stone, slither and clank of sunset
 through the swooning lupins to my room, no room at all, only a hub
for passing storms. i lie on my back staring into the voices falling down the walls
 the room grows larger, blustery. waves dart at my feet
the trees gather at my door announcing every hour on the hour until the galleon
sails up the stairs and takes them away

arrival

the landing of WalMart 1

day 1 earth paws and snorts under bellies of seeded clouds. i load the sea onto an ox-drawn tumbrel, pebbles dribble implausible rubble

day 2 bog pockets, scrub lots, geese reading oraculous grass. heat lightning, shabby houses on shady streets the humans are all online, leaving only test patterns behind them

day 3 chopped sod, engines boning basins oceans once roamed, earthworms screaming down the anthropocene jut of concrete butte. long ugly days repeat in sleep even uglier, second verse always worse

day 4 they said i was the one to bring them in. cons ago i, first of the Walmarts, lost my reason, my memory fed just enough to work, plugged into my dock, i woke overclocked. never taught beyond bottom line

day 5 humans don't see i am what they've become the past is gone, they have no past. the world is wrong they don't know more wrongs don't right, they don't know home, only wrong beating all sides

day 6 i speed through all the tomorrows hiding
in plainlight. fey and mad, i feed on once was, could
be, should have, no more, never was. again the sun
nothing certain on this planet

day 7 grand opening. they will not be undersold
so many wights sharpied between market share and
pay-point, their tiny tattooed rebellions scooped in
my latest price drop, bright shoals dimming in my
barren aquarium, settling the bottom, no one'll
remember they

choices

diagnose your
post-nasal drip, sinus
infection

hyper
plasmic

artery disease. glycemic index. amino
acid profile, cortisol level
cool Metamucil
smile, Oral B

Deep Sweep

Tampax Sharkfin

non-GMO soylent meal replacement

ancient Asian
fermentation

heat-
resistant bacteria

your unique
flora!

stop robo-opioids
bottled water

one rogue jar of mayo can undo

years of dieting
kyo-dophilus never fails me
or my family

3D-printed
apolipo
protein fruitarians
all-day temperance sermons
obsessed juice
consumers
download MRI therapy app
phobia-free iPhone
understand
arachnaphobia

talk to your
big pharmapathist
confide in your cognitive label machine
ask yourself
how are *you* responsible
for negativity
in the world

sold separately

1

soft cork lacquered bamboo jute user surface *the more virtual
our lives become the more we crave* SINNERLAG arrives October
oak veneer solid ash melamine birch laminate stainless
LAXARBY MAXIMERA Blekinge white pebble ATTEST
hooded 3-speed standalone hard-wearing non-stick solitaires
designed by you

2

maybe it's the step stool that brings you PERSONLIG Alaska
plastic acrylic Skiftebo grey bone china heat resistant solid
walnut SITTING tealight Nollhaga white *create moments that
are special* polyester ORRSTA blue cotton satin latex banana
scented handwoven paraffin *dropped at your door*

3

NEW BYARUM *ode to the beauty of home* rolls of gold foil paper
fibreboard *with or without flowers you can use outdoors or in* high
gloss frosted GLASSVIK super-slim dimmable KIMSTAD
luminaire *softer darker over time* stained pine solid poplar box
with lid NEXUS effect *use individually or part of a larger set-up*

4

STUGVIK suction plastic turquoise Vietnamese melamine
gloss faucet deep wardrobe *face your clothes straight on* multi-use
jewel insert KOMPLEMENT valet hanger SKUBBboxes *grow*
slowly in the far north so the wood is naturally dense robust blond
rubber colours *never mistake black for navy again*

5

memory foam wick-away pocket horsehair material wool
natural lyocell washable microfibre *rustic beauty comes from using*
more knotty slatted white dyed POLARVIDE throw full
double *this duveted bedspread has contrasting sides* GASPA brown
low pile latex sheepskin modacrylic OSTED sissal offcuts *hide*
more than your underwear

6

self-adhesive easy-to-grip white FINTORP hook stackable
rattan double duty BERTA RUTA *create your own BESTA*
combination origami-inspired mouthblown POMP lantern
scented romantic pattern *or choose one we made for you*

scirocco

1

gentlemen, our limo awaits. overalls, rubber apron, hard hat, tattoos, knives up the wazoo, bloody bits, fat lip, can't even spit up. i'm drug-free, bud, willing to work, pee in a cup, my mind is a hard bright city where powerful uncles dwell. here we go, life's road, my friends. it's late, i'm tired. so here we are, 'The Lairage, Total Confinement Resort and Spa. exotic hot dog slides, bacon champagne, top quality propylene. i see Kaneko by the pool raking the steam with a long hooked pole. must be the stunbolt springs, saw it online. listen to em, they almost sound human. thing to keep in mind about Freddy, Porky, Babe. stop naming them, against company policy. they're all charm, so goddamn cute. sure, they're loveable, crooked as hell though, not to be trusted, don't ever trust em. can't wait to go for a soak, anyone bring a water board

2

can't sleep, worst spa ever, hiss of power hoses, walls so thin we can hear em piss. make like it's a party, broken glasses of opa, flowing ashtrays. shit, why aren't we invited. going to melt in this heat. why aren't you shaved like everyone else. don't have a razor. where you from. i speak five languages, even Tagalog. Kaneko was so weak he shat through a hole in the floor, so loud we couldn't hear Aleppo disappear. i will say nothing about the exam but one day i was hustled onto the welcome wagon, brought to some asylum. police know pigs. they're smart, they pretend they're human. maybe they got the same soft bellies, hearts, livers, don't make em human, how many times do i got to. Kaneko took stress leave. when i passed his house all i heard was squeaking, squeaking, squeaking. in the end he ended up in the Funny Farm

3

head's up, hoofsters, move, move. she'll bring a good price, strong legs, our lucky day. keep trotting along. we might get more. so this march is going and going, forever we march, the ones who don't fall down from all this marching. move, move. yeh yeh, no room to fall. inspectors be coming. fix the goddamn awning, polish the logo, shuffle the chairs in the boardroom. whoa, Mr Bigshot hasn't guts to look me in the eye but free hotdogs on Friday. sprayers on HI. open your mouth, girl, i want to count your teeth. is she shaved. it's April of what weak day. good grief, what happened to me, went to bed feeling okay. fifteen minutes to zap, degut, dispatch to the chillers. ten second stun then cut its fucken throat. i am civirized per-son, Kaneko used to say that. i liked him better when he was funny. c'mon, give us a smile, there goes a good old girl

4

she was a friend of Anja, she hanged a long time. i go to mass. what did you say, i am a saint? how can i be a saint hanging without a trial. psst, some of us want to escape into the woods. help us get civilian clothes, sign this petition and join us. you'll lose your job, your place on line, the people's lim-o-zeen won't come for you, you'll have to go back to Tagalog or whatever shithole when they build the wall. no use tacking any moral to this horror, s'called life, bro, cuff em Drano, chop-chop on the throughput. i manage things around here, i talked em into putting more money in, we'll go colour too. so peaceful, mist rising over the lake. maybe i rest here a few minutes, go back to normal, wonder how long i hang here

wakey-wakey eggs and breaky. believe me, i tell you this is a 24/7 money maker, stock up 110 per cent. throw out the dead, clean up the filth. i'd rather kill myself than go through that. what, stocking groceries? they get six dollars value new product. what the hell do i do with all these animals. what we take in today. Kaneko would say blood, bloody hands, bloody dreams, every night i dream i find animals under my bed, they break into my house, stay a while, maybe watch TV, make a sandwich, always leaving something, stain on the sofa, clumps of hair in the sink, and always that stink. i'm going to the Caribbean, pirates, Sir Francis Drake. i'd love to visit. the scirocco has started to blow. so beautiful today. no snow, maybe we can all go to market

wonderstruck athunder

gruel world

the more grise to my elbow
the harder i gruel, the longer
my spoon the merrier my cans
of chocolatey bilk (swiss
condensed version)

o fellow underlords, the Law
does not aloud me to shout
the Outback's dead heart

plymouth brethren panning
spent planets just to taste
the coalfired goodness of
CloudBurgher

iAsbestopol!
my bourse is on course

million-pound sterling troll
the atoll, turnkeyed out of
their berms over the chum
needed to keep one barrel
of bounty aroll

celerity apprentice

lower the Planckgang
place that T-square of burial
jade upright, release the eight
o'clocks

legalentitleds peck
salted dayographs out of
incentivized sky

never dip in the earn
with open browsers lest ye
attract rusty Octobrists

work for progress heave ho
saviourize your labour while
you have enough litebrite

newrosis

i saw the first think-states
silver down gullies of pixels
inked in Pantone Multimirror
(TM)

humenymys belly up in
newrological stew. who can say
whom we are looking through

every honest-to-god caught
in backlight can upload
the apocalypso glo
of paylater

de-treed, redeemed
algorhymed and rhizomed
all-inclusive

Gullible's tribbles

we are all uploads
wonderstruck athunder down
yonder, uniswoon shipalone
under cover (Protected A)

mystic christian eschatology
crosses a million beds baths
and beyond

the whole pyramid scheme
rumbleth dumbnation
from on Hi

faux-newsmen! wood-be
this-worlders, curl up in your
own parsonal bethels
of warship

ottomanic antivaxxers
dirge up pastfuls of bloody
altarations

there's this - the Face-of-Jesus
All U Can Eat Valu Menu
(like and share

if you come across it
on your Gullible's
tribbles)

vestigial

the mappamund has repatterned
since time first committed
murmury behind mind's ear

i'm Big Man-In-The-Sky
five-storied semi-detached
in Sylvania's vouted ampire
(stained glass fx)

bookmarked by the lost
i've become a worse and worse
copy of myself

wasted with Wantit i rise to
as many as plausible of the Ten
Bombardments except the one
about hatenot havenots

the bizness day never ends
for us, my friends

no matter how i throw
the clay, it always goes awry

humble in jumbo
continuum, kneedeep in this
terroir of hours over-run
by Ford Erinyes

unvisited yesterselves
ghosted in this old game
of haunt

tindersticks

I
hang on St Christopher
it's execution day and i'm
no good at conversation

Neptune drowns Mercury
in the 12th House

turns my words to water
drums par ump a pump
pump am i human?

guilty by association
i sold out during the last
spiritual collapse

somewhere in the rubies
is the CEO's sermon

my mission
remix a bottom-dollar
Baltic tanker into Trans
danubian Satan dub
in the key of X

i have two hours

II

how can I revise global
apocalypse while Aegis
falls over the Reich and
voices from the New
Music accuse me of
being another casualty
of Glass

another metaphor
pocks the floor
of my sonic bidet

i need an immaculate
injection from Tech
Support in Manilla
so i'm not roadkill
on the zodiacal
wheel

3:15, i need 13 images
from the dark land or
my ass is in the grave
yard

somewhere
brilliant trees shake their
tindersticks over pieces
of Africa

ruined in a day
as usual

think i'll brew some
Desolée, disappear
for a season

III

rush-hour soma
i walk on locusts past
the crack-Mac on the
corner of Third World
and Vine

looking for a sea change
in the ozone eyes of
children injecting 300
years of chemistry

Mars escorts Venus
to the sausage factory
by the docks

i soulmine my cell-
phone, no one home

angry moons hurl
family heirlooms at
redundant stars

dead dance across
tribal acid savannas

ancient pines dream
of Isis. i pause to roast
a jesuit on a spit

saw the head off
a thunder god in the
transglobal underground
of volunteer slavery

core

polyester

lilies, tiled hallways

eternal dawn, canned

vic ennuie

spectral blurt, dirty ritual

escalators

ravenous food courts

craven expansion

plans

American

storefronts, Asian factories

cruddled undercloud, mud

and limpets in Sleep Country

shucked inmates

rework the product

mix

walk through

the covered logo

no matter how dark

you know

where you are

II



crypto

patent pending

conceptual design

a spark leaped from the key
 'Teslan resonance
emanations
universal news
 rows of prime
 Menlo Park
incoming
embryonics

condemned William Kemmler
 first humane electrocution
 we sawed the top
off the subject's head, removed
the brain, saw the Deed was done
 patent pending
 [insert
 sound commercial
 here]

Greek-style cybernetics

lyrical velocity

of shell. George Ellery Hale: a sea

lion should not mean but be

a submarine

enigmatic momentum

hardware embodiment

drums of intrepid

numerology

rotor-operated Boolean

slivers of crystal intel

business logic

of the profit-making decision

Bletchley Park

awake under an

Eniac sky

occult mechanism

humans are both

useful servos and mad pulses

caught between mathematics

and flux

endemic symbolics

making them believe

they can grow their own

story arcs

no matter, quantum

computing only a paradigm away

Los Alamos

atomic bombs

black boxes that see under

water, on

coming night

tiny geometries

Bell Lab loose

in pursuit. run of the mill

women eliminating time

semi-conductors

doped prototypes

oscillating possibilities

ferrite material

all-channel contagion, salesman's panache

volume-whipped by IBM

Moon Walk, no esoteric process

a few ics, trons

izations far from

the safe

consumer entropy

yawful consumption

fathomless maw

prone to boredom

electronic smog, operator error

schmooplots

two-headed babies

in asbestos cases

consumers

problematic at best

sometimes particles

sometimes waves

soft fail whenever an alpha particle

strikes common

silicon

angstrom economies

etiolated
technocracies, Phoenix Arizona
mundane explanations, suntanned
moneymen
unplanned innovation
under the Hoover
Tower

silica chips delivered
in cylinders. EYES ONLY
incantations
step-and-repeat
stars and moons
cost-per-bit mass
integration

individual earth stations

program humanids
binary strings
eight bits long, input-output
one design one
stop chip shop

turn all Ma Bell's children
into comsats
individual earth stations
leased in perpetuity
at lucrative
routes

turbofiction

gone, the days of Trollope, the single market in which Author told us a fixed property-based story inscribed under the vault of Heaven

fiction has become a real-time stock market, crowded with plots untethered to reality resulting in subprime real estate, loss of investor confidence

perhaps the urban exodus of storytelling in the 21st Century, smack bang in the credit crunch, reproduces the displacement of rural populations during the Industrial Revolution

hoodwinked by the reality effect of accelerating profits, today's narratives are managed by some outsourced team who can work within the bilious walls of a cloud

modernism has caused erosion of banking laws, allowing just-in-time dialogue to flood the fiction market

you may search the novels of Virginia Woolf in vain for big battles and crossed romances. remember how *The Waves* triggered the financial tsunami of 2008?

writers were once Authors, thoughtful interpreters of the world.
criminal fictions run by biased narrators have replaced high holy art
with the Securities and Exchange Commission

we no longer examine the interior lives of characters like ourselves.
instead we watch axolotls flicker down the eternal present of relativity

no longer citizen-soldier, the Author is but a logistical platform
playing to readers placed in networked custody

like it or not, compilers, tweeters, secret sharers have shown up
on your doorstep bloodied by mobile cameras, ending lifetime
employment for the Author

if you so much as try to ignore them you will end up tomb-rubbing
in phenomenal port towns at the peripheries of once-great
civilizations

runaway narrator

once i was Scheherazade
trapped in a Family Novel
a narrative fixed in amber
domesticity

until i fell in love with
the Information

oh, the beauty of data

the abs of mapware
the cynical glint of
analytics

my search terms
rolled west

past the Rockies
all rumpled extensions
liminal terminals

3 million base-pairs
slewed into bouquets
of protocol

valleys of plasma
burned in noon sun

i was awed by oxblood
diagnostics growing high
as rain

the sea, typically focused
on publishing new organisms
diversified into storage
management

satellites tolled, i rubbed
my bloodshot cathodes
a breakfast sandwich
applauded

active verbs skipped
mandatory fields

family histories scuttled
into drainpipes

i crept into Prince Rupert
unable to remember how
to land an epiphany

the Night Manager
wanted his dream back
but i hadn't finished mining
its attributes

crime seen

fallen hero

disgraced football coach, Theodor
Adorno (Tay-O), injected his team
with atonal music before turning
the weapon on himself

found during the search a suicide
note: *once you buy into it you realize
you are part of something so much bigger
than the tyrannical harmony of bourgeois
musical naturalness*

the Frankfurt School dusted their
cleats, banned atonal music from
campus

a nation mourns

structuralism crashed into a
wooded hillside after personal
choice beheaded naïve positivism
on a Greyhound bus

Saussure was carried out on a
stretcher. his tautology shattered
but did not catch fire

police cautioned the public
*once a lay employee of the Holy See
individual choice is now the ideology
of the industrial system*

Paris in chaos. possible mechanical
failure of Guy Debord's head sent
a minivan into the left lane. an entire
nation careened into an irrigation
ditch

*only the most impoverished imagination
could suggest two Porsches to a family
is sufficient* Bezos stated in his
manifesto

not again!

we called Hawc 1 helicopter
after the colour spectrum divested
itself from symbolic meaning

Hello Kitty was jailed in Vermilion
charged with theft of collective
memory. *It's tragic we've allowed this
to happen again* said Mayor Virilio

currency depreciation

an outbreak of criminal weather
on the east coast has disturbed
early libidinal development in
chip-enabled debit cards

one out of two simple-to-use
kiosks, even those with BitCoin
identified as stupid old women
who don't expect to be circulated
as signs of wealth or good design

what do they want?

3 am Central Time, a dismayed
Sigmund Freud espied the girls
once units in a system of signs
their faces no longer expressed
pleasure

kingpin caught

nature and culture suffered
multiple stab wounds during
a festival of side-show politics
Gropius, clad in a sk8r boy
hoodie, claimed responsibility

*yeah I killed the Social Contract
lyin' cheatin' Marxists took my money
framed my meaning tied my signifier
to the signified and run run run*

arrested developments

a seventeen-year-old faces
the alienated essence of man's
life and labour after objective
reality was found dead inside
the second largest group home
in the world

the inauthenticity of art
was not a factor

limited time only

1

airmiles was back, limited time only. what i planned to do was row through Edmonton but took the Calgary Region Infill Tour. five infills, five renovations. did i stop at the Hermitage? no, i was busy seeking Rilke

2

after months of hearing how the change in testing is expected to make it more difficult for the Fraser Institute to rank schools. i collected yelp reviews from gophers then removed the Night Watch from its template

3

alas, the road circled the castle. my offer was not valid with any other coupon. the sale excluded jewelry, items tagged as housewares or furniture. i recall underlining that sentence in *The Pensées* when i was in college

4

water rose to the tops of my sandal straps
at dusk i emerged from the cul-de-sac, tagged the body
informed the family. not even photo-radar could stop
me from turning my shoes upside-down to release
the Sophists

5

every day i lunched with Voltaire at the Calgary Tower
only needing a five per cent deposit until i took possession
of course, making all necessary revisions. why did i imply
at the interview that Babel designed the Tower?

6

yesterday's sunset was a Van Gogh which tried to block roads
and attack vehicles. the Potato-Eaters did not deter me from
revving a generator in the Glenbow Museum

7

all i know about Wuthering Heights is that women were always
looking out windows and swooning. Odysseus was an alias for
Ulysses. King and Messiah were the trending baby names but
one could only get financing on Matrix and Corolla

8

in my first American visit since Vegas, i purchased New
Balance Toning Shoes. my rights may be impacted by a class
action settlement. if i wish to opt out i must complete and
submit the Opt-Out form

9

i can't remember why i tried to carry that nine-foot blog up
the stairway in the Glenbow Museum. then there was the time
i fell asleep in a Vermeer. the Famous Five were never so dire

10

since then i've been plying my Dollar Menu to boost
sales. it is known Van Gogh sold only one painting
in his lifetime. even Rembrandt went belly-up
despite his bejewelled selfies

11

what colour were my red roses? even though i explore
all possibilities, empower my life choices, enjoy every
minute of time spent with respected business mentors
i have never owned a painting by George Bush
the Younger

12

i host the best parties. everyone from Zeno to Bentham
has paraded through my mcmansion exposing their
theories especially Heidegger who never leaves
how weary i have grown of Dasein

13

held a season-ending availability after the Flames
were swept away by rosy-fingered dawn. I xeroxed
an email to John Ruskin. on my honour, Ruskin
once told his butler to address visiting sunsets
by their formal titles

14

having completely forgotten the laundry i printed
a working 38-calibre handgun. trying to explain
the difference between an illusion of anxiety
and anxiety itself is like comparing printed
and mechanical handguns

the Arab Spring

a social media history

on the front lines

the girls called, someone is shooting
strange seeing something so intimate
people posed as customers

seven rounds fired, one hitting the house
they're just upset, right? we're a decent family
i don't wear jewelry, i don't understand
those who do

the entire thing is gorgeous, friendly staff
i had never been to Libya though i was raised
in Kelowna. quaint shops, pubs
great family operation

violence increases

on Sunday everyone decided making
a snowman was serious business. my partner
keeps the receipts just in case

so the other day Violet went, oh Mom
we have to talk. i sprayed a whole can
of Bear-B-Gone on my face then cleared
the creek in one leap

the plane was on a mission for Qaddafi
so uplifting, bad guys in a movie, such
a sweet relationship, best costumes ever

western support for Arab Spring rebels

i'll be blogging with them for six months
no one realizes how hard it is to write
a book when you're tweeting and skypeing
with rebels

our mandate is to dress them in bright
colours, give them a big personality
ingredients are listed in order of serving
size. Dr Oz says we can add a side salad

we worry about those who don't know
Keto. supplements are part of the move up
to semi-estate lots, multi-level marketing
creates an inviting home

political analysis

though this seems to be a psychological
thriller with horror overtones, deep down
it's a love story sponsored by Amway

all the characters have a real inner life
it would be interesting to stage the rebellion
with trampolines

it's like a Voice audition. every rebellion
is different; content that may be fine for some
is disturbing to others. apart from the awful
noise, bruxism is not a problem

i'm proposing some common sense reforms
so folks can run for office. people, it's all about
consequences. i don't know if we can handle
a healthier population

you can't pursue human rights complaints
just because your feelings are hurt

immortal attributes

idylls

enciphered packets
dipt in the richest
tincture, light the sky

brooks, bowers
buzz-word slingers
with bare bodkins
sing reputation
data

i wander among
flower-inwoven
transponders
and behold!

bright-harnessed
angels of Eurasian
bootleg alive in
beechen-green
sidebands

sunset flares o'er
the warbling grove
playsome LEDs race
through vast reaches
of processor space

i hide in Wiki-glades
Bacchus pipes code
sequence. darling
bulkloads populate
greenfields, a Day
huge as Yesterday

random spam commits
unpremeditated art in
the murmurous haunt
of hard drives on a
midsummer's eve

lamentations

my heart aches
feckless Poindexters
shipwreck my lyric
hayricks

virii smite the lyre
nymphs compile
errors in hidden
modules

i wage not any feud
merely rage against
the foul afflictions of
ornamental bird-baths
full of the heavy water
of meter'd rhythm

old Thyme's a'flyin
Sweet Thames! run
softly, tripwire and
poison against the
bridal day

i adorn myself
acorn, urn and
truncheon

but madmen
crown'd with laurel
cannot sweeten
the zap-straps of
Windows upgrades

daffadillies fill
their cups, riddles
of death Bitnet
never knew.

once upon a time
volatiles did sing
hey ding a ding
ding

now sweet violets
sicken in the vain
shine of LEDs

i strike the
Motherboard
cry, no more
write no more
the tale of Troy

o homebrewed
lobotomy!
keep me from
burning!

elegies

batter my heart
Pay-Per-Use God

cuckold, whore
and knave! Saudi
royals! Mayor
McCheese!

i strangely distrust
helmèd sysadmins
smit with binary
gore

Global Zotob strews
the laureate hearse
where Lycid lies

jammed in trumpspeak
i disambiguate the
multitudinous abyss

REM phantoms
stumps of girdl'd
dreams terminate
my instance

your chip will
go berserk
when i exit
this text

do you wake
or sleep?

leap year

1

in the city of violet
twilight illegally changes lanes. a gang of music boxes
follow me around, all tinkling the same
jingle

hearts arrive here every day
one losing contestant after another leaping into a city
besieged by scarabs demanding the moon
show her face

2

the future explodes mid-air
roofs doze in gold-coated drought, thirsty corvids rob
the seven-elevens lying beyond
state control

another Abyss rolls offroad
into newsbots, a million golems abducted by political
axioms, cell towers triangulate
the new normal

nohere

1

ever so strangely out of work
no longer Zeus but Statue, wrapped and hidden
in the faceless They of which no one is part
official mourners escort my pure
inner vision into ruin

i surrender my passport to the Night
Nurse. just another dishonoured Fury unheard
in the terminal murmur. Eurydice lost, Orpheus
dispersed, all i possess is this desolate quest
once the Poetic Word i echo vernacular
no one will speak again

2

another redundant poem en vacance
in Marienbad. groggy from all the tobogganing
senseless roads in snow, dreadful. i cannot
consider the doctor a personal saviour
no Third Land for me here

i imbibe primordial rum, become
Rimbaud, bid adieu to the impossible, flee
to the Sands, always far from here but never
there, wayfaring nohere without end
all the way to the end

3

as a poem i had my humanist dreams
love, nature, beauty, a blueprint of the cosmos
until some bloody Noah flooded my words
while i tried to save myself by selling arms
at the last moment of no more world
no world yet

meaning shatters in the vast distress
lost in the loss, addressed to no one, how
to be alone after falling into the unoccupied
unoccupiable, where i am not here, no one
is here, what happens to me happens
to no one

the fartoom

nous

for days were nights
in the fartoom
anyness

sotoolonly in onesomeness
i invent heaven with animated gifs
become a being becoming again

emojis streak through the buzzfeed
the scrawl on my facewall rollicks
slo-code into wetted life

all atrot in windy Nous
i raise claymation quake up
half-past Quik in the ayem

adhominids

look at us crossing
your touchscreen, dirt-side
refuseniks, ruck of hackneyed
ad-hominems

Bauhaus cosplayers full of trollery
in architectural dollaramas

airmiled to the teeth we smile
feeling agog the round of us agrog
in Google, putting truth untruth
together

survey

you know i'm a busy organism
crudely designed solipsystem

midden of muddy old delta
forked hundreds of tines
run in parallel

ramped up temporal lobe
single-channel base-band
god-mod add-on

sysops mock uppity noobs
singing alibis from their
six-penny stiles

help me improve my ad
experience, shape my species
make us the best instance
currently running

slangwanging

at Starbucks i dunk my
little syntalks in subjunctions
hot enough to stunt the sun

script under corruption
hitme versers keyclicking
facsimiles to the farscape

oldcant data cheaping down
morbidly drab hobby lobbies

and lo stole o'er forests
limrick'd by wifi machines
the unnamable blautüth

first-person poetry built
from the dust of robot brain
surgery, crash national
low-wage

rhetoric, common
pandemic, squabbles entered
as second-class matter
open letters in bottles

series of events

unsure if we're getting the anti-perspirant protection we need, we start storing our gallon jugs of turpentine on the fire escape. a wrong turn in a snowstorm takes us more than 30 kms out of our way. sky clears but temperature drops to -32. we just found that rich scallop bed and we will not give into the gale bearing down on us. while returning from an out-of-town game we are stopped by an ambulance with flashing lights. they wheel someone out on a stretcher and we lose at least an hour in traffic. a Twin Otter spirals at 175 feet and plunges into the harbour. the DC-9 catches fire, aft pressure bulkhead hatch and fuselage tailcone blow off. radar shows false blips, no major airports answer our calls. we know they are ghosting us. the last bus leaves, stranding us in the malarial lowlands where we are uprooted by soldiers. a thousand or so refugees are toiling toward us. they express no surprise at finding us at the border. they offer no explanation, show no relief or joy, not one of them smiling. all we can say now is that 4 times a year a widow in Raratonga, a doctor in Ghana, a croupier in Vegas all watch for identical plain-wrapped packets. after 150 hours of observing we receive no evidence of signals. scheduling pressures cause the search to stop at 70 stars. we slip further into darkness

the tow

i slip in and out
of oceanthought

half-listening, distant
skitter, crystal
lizards
an alphabet is chained
to my briny mind
little criminals splitting
acrostics

letter by letter
sentenced words slow-mo
sea to brawling sky
howling vowels
forced to their feet

stone-buttoned
consonants
step over the fallen

shaman is solemn today
awakens imago from the tow
chalks the air
with paristexas

syntaxis refuse my fairtrade
lingwage
keeps foaling
on my hoard

sent to the noose's room
i can't enuncio, make sovereign
when i know
nothing what i speak

deep in words where birds
dare not

the dead

the dead chain you to a box-spring
and black-out the windows, they say it's dark, time to sleep
you never saw what you saw, it never happened
the child crying in a cage, it never stops
you go to her, some dead goon
cuffs you

says back off, this is a crime scene
no one touch the subject, we need a pole to roll her over
she's probly booby-trapped. the back-up dead yells
gahead, find her fucken family, you know
where the insects are thickest
that's where they are

an NRA dead wheels a trolley full
of assault rifles through the ward, says to all of us lying
on our bedrolls, c'mon folks, time to lock and load
this time we'll win. you're lying in the dark
fed only AR-15s, you want back
to light

you remember what happened
and you say you remember what happened that night
the heat blared, the dead brayed on cable news
children in cages, some weeping, most just
staring in the dark, in the cages
in the dark

but the dead don't know what's bad
they don't know what's good, they don't care, they look
at you as if they're surprised you have a forehead
and what they have to say is only so much
lividity, it means whatever lividity
means to the dead

and when you say you can't forget
that night, the year leading to that night, they say you're
crazy, a crisis actor planted by fake news. it hurts
they tell you, forget what hurts you. it hurts
take your butt-hurt outside and bury it
you can't put it behind you

want to know who put it behind them?
the dead, the dead are the ones who put it behind them
their spark snuffed long ago, they never knew what
that spark was worth and they're hungry
they took your voice, they can't
speak for themselves

every night you feel their dead
hands, their dead media on your shoulders, not a story
these ghosts are real, they're mean and bitter, they
outnumber you and they're not finished yet
you're alive, they're not, think they'll
forgive you?

at last you drag the bedroll
down the stairs, looking all ways, hoping no one sees you
it's heavy, the weight of it, like pulling a body from
a swamp full of torn roots, dead hands
choking you, pushing you
under

you'll leave the body at this tree
trees know there's no safe place. you want to know why
why this is happening and the dead only say what
they always say, it's god's will, it began with
the creator, it can't be helped, we just
follow orders

after the last bomb goes off
after earth's surface is a crust of ash after the oily black
wind stops circling burnt sand and giant anthills
somewhere a dead will crawl out his hole
in his hand will be a gun, it will
be loaded

he will know how to use it, that is
the only thing he knows and the hate, the killing will
start over, it will start all over again, but this time
when the dead look in their mirror you'll
be there instead, sending your rain
down the sky

crossing

social chop-shop too sharp today
streets teeming mobile rage disowned
elite unlight not quite half-beat
always never the same

eyes of burger cartons rising two
storeys above dawn corroded memes
full of saltsmell failed old dial-up
crossing in fog